

means of the forts and arsenal in her borders rendered success wellnigh hopeless from the start. Not only were the members of Congress from the State who called upon Mr. Buchanan unable to give him any positive assurance that the State would keep the peace, pending efforts for a peaceful solution of the serious questions which the secession of the State was sure to raise, but they took pains to warn him that the authorities of the State would certainly proceed to hostilities unless the United States Government consented to allow its forts and garrison to remain in their existing indefensible situation. They pointed out the precarious condition of the forts; they made no secret of the intention of the State ultimately to get possession of them; and then they endeavored to induce the President to consent to an indefinite continuance of this unsafe state of things, under a threat of immediate violence should he make any attempt to improve the situation. Such diplomacy reminds one of the fable of the wolf and the lamb; its failure might have been predicted in advance. Its every utterance was menacing and hostile; the Government of South Carolina might as well have seized the undefended forte and arsenal in the first instance, and then sent if necessary.

missioners to Washington to treat for Fort Moultrie.

It was certainly to the credit of South Carolina that she did not do this; but she ought, if she tried peaceful methods at all, to have given them a fair trial. This, in the existing temper of the people and the officials, was perhaps hardly practicable; but then a sagacious statesman might, one would